

Buffalo, NY – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus, today brought the nation's leading federal arts advocate to many of Western New York's most notable and historic sites for the arts.

Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Rocco Landesman today toured the George Eastman House and Strong-National Museum of Play in Rochester with Slaughter. They spent the afternoon visiting Shea's Performing Arts Center, Kleinhans Music Hall and the Darwin Martin House in Buffalo.

"I am delighted that Rocco has come to Western New York to witness firsthand the treasures that we have in Rochester and Buffalo," said Slaughter. "Today I'm able to showcase the creativity of the Strong Museum, the dynamic films of the George Eastman House, the architecture and artistry of Shea's and Kleinhans and the genius of Frank Lloyd Wright at the Darwin Martin House. The arts are such an important part of our cultural fabric and that's remarkably evident in Western New York. I'm so pleased to share these gems with my friend Rocco."

Landesman comes to Western New York at Slaughter's invitation and serves as part of a larger tour of Upstate New York.

"I am excited to be in Rochester and Buffalo today with a dear friend and a great supporter of the arts, Congresswoman Louise Slaughter," said Chairman Landesman. "Western New York has some true cultural treasures, and I am pleased to be visiting them to highlight their economic impact on the region and the importance of places like Shea's, Kleinhans and the Darwin Martin House to the nation's cultural heritage."

Rocco Landesman was confirmed by the United States Senate on August 7, 2009 as the tenth chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Prior to joining the NEA, he produced Broadway shows, notably *Big River* (1985 Tony Award for Best Musical), *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* (1993 Tony Award for Best Play), *Angels in America: Perestroika* (1994 Tony Award for Best Play), and *The Producers* (2001 Tony Award for Best Musical). A biography of Landesman is included below.

According to Americans for the Arts, the arts industry has a vast impact on the nation's economy. Each year, the arts industry generates \$166.2 billion annually in economic activity, supports 5.7 million full-time jobs and generates almost \$12.6 billion in tax revenues. Nationally, there are 756,007 arts related businesses in the United States that employ 3 million people. In Slaughter's district alone there are 1,229 arts-related businesses employing 15,864 individuals.

Slaughter has been a long-time champion of the arts and serves as Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus, a bipartisan organization for Members of Congress who support

the arts through federal initiatives. For more on her work to promote and fund vital national arts programs, [click here](#).

Here's what some of today's hosts had to say about the Chairman and Congresswoman's visit:

**Strong National Museum of Play** ▯ [www.museumofplay.org](http://www.museumofplay.org)

"The Strong is proud to have the opportunity to host NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman during his visit to Rochester and we are grateful to Representative Louise Slaughter for her steadfast leadership support of arts and cultural organizations. She truly understands the contribution arts and culture make to our quality of life both nationally and here in Western New York," said G. Rollie Adams, President and CEO of The Strong.

**George Eastman House** ▯ [www.eastmanhouse.org](http://www.eastmanhouse.org)

"We are delighted to host Rocco Landesman and Congresswoman Louise Slaughter at George Eastman House, where together we will experience rare films that have been restored with support from the National Endowment of the Arts," said Dr. Anthony Bannon, the Ron and Donna Fielding Director of George Eastman House.

**Shea's Performing Arts Center** ▯ [www.sheas.org](http://www.sheas.org)

"We are very pleased to be able to show Mr. Landesman our National Historic Theatre, one of the region's cultural gems. We continue in our restoration of 'The Wonder Theatre' to its original grandeur," said Tony Conte, President of Shea's Performing Arts Center.

**Kleinhans Music Hall, Home of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra** ▯ [www.bpo.org](http://www.bpo.org)

"As a member of the National Council on the Arts, I am particularly delighted to welcome NEA

Chair Rocco Landesman to Buffalo and to our wonderful National Historic Landmark venue, Kleinhans Music Hall. Each of us in the arts here are deeply grateful to the NEA for the vital support they have provided to our cultural institutions over the decades. It is a proud moment for us to showcase one of the architectural gems in our community, and one that would not have been completed without supplemental funds from the federal government via the Works Progress Administration in the 1939." JoAnn Falletta, Music Director, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra

### **Darwin Martin House** □ [www.darwinmartinhouse.org](http://www.darwinmartinhouse.org)

"We are honored by Mr. Landesman's visit in the company of Cong. Slaughter," said Robert J. Kresse, chairman of the board of the Martin House Restoration Corporation. "The Martin House was extraordinary when designed by Frank Lloyd Wright a century ago, and it is extraordinary in its renewal and restoration. Mr. Landesman's interest is testimony to the significance of this National Historic Landmark."

### **Biography of NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman**

Rocco Landesman was confirmed by the United States Senate on August 7, 2009 as the tenth chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Prior to joining the NEA, he was a Broadway theater producer.

Mr. Landesman was born (July 20, 1947) and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He pursued his undergraduate education at Colby College and the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and earned a doctorate in Dramatic Literature at the Yale School of Drama. At the completion of his course work, Mr. Landesman stayed at the school for four years, working as an assistant professor.

Mr. Landesman's ensuing career has been a hybrid of commercial and artistic enterprises. In 1977, he left Yale to start a private investment fund which he ran until his appointment in 1987 as president of Jujamcyn, a company that owns and operates five Broadway theaters: St. James, Al Hirschfeld, August Wilson, Eugene O'Neill, and Walter Kerr theaters.

Before and after joining Jujamcyn, Mr. Landesman produced Broadway shows, the most notable of which are Big River (1985 Tony Award for Best Musical), Angels in America: Millenium Approaches (1993 Tony Award for Best Play), Angels in America: Perestroika (1994 Tony Award for Best Play), and The Producers (2001 Tony Award for Best Musical). In 2005, he purchased Jujamcyn and operated it until President Obama announced his intention to nominate him to the NEA chairmanship.

Mr. Landesman has been active on numerous boards, including the Municipal Arts Society; the Times Square Alliance; The Actor's Fund; and the Educational Foundation of America. Mr. Landesman has also vigorously engaged the ongoing debate about arts policy, speaking at forums and writing numerous articles, focusing mainly on the relationship between the commercial and not-for-profit sectors of the American theater. Over the years, he returned to the Yale School of Drama and Yale Rep to teach.

Mr. Landesman is married to Debby Landesman. Mrs. Landesman is an independent consultant and the former executive director of the Levi Strauss Foundation; she advises corporations and foundations on their philanthropic strategies. He has three sons: North, Nash, and Dodge.

Mr. Landesman's biggest passions are theater, baseball, horse racing, and country music. On any given day he will insist that one of these is the perfect expression of American culture. At one time or another, he owned three minor league baseball teams, various racehorses, and a collection of Roger Miller long-playing records.

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